



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Council

FROM: David Lurie, *[Signature]* Acting Assistant City Manager

DATE: July 23, 2008

SUBJECT: Agenda Item #40 – Ordinance Amendment

On the July 24, 2008 City Council meeting agenda there is an item relating to the Renaissance Market Commission.

At the City Council meeting on June 18, 2008 you approved an amendment to the City Code regarding Boards and Commissions. This action provided for clarification of operational rules and definitions and repealed sections regarding various boards that have separate and distinct requirements. The proposed action included dissolving the Renaissance Market Commission but retaining the market and transferring the licensing of vendors to the staff. Consideration of all action pertaining to the Renaissance Market Commission was postponed to your July 24, 2008 meeting.

In 1972, the City Council passed an ordinance establishing the People's Renaissance Market, an area on 23rd street between San Antonio and Guadalupe streets that had become a place of business for many Austin artisans. This market would be maintained and promoted through the Parks and Recreation Department. In 1975, due to the popularity of the market, overcrowding of vendors became an issue. In October of that year, the City Council created a temporary vending commission to help ease overcrowding by determining who should receive licenses to operate in the Renaissance Market.

In 1976, the Council established the Vending Commission to regulate items sold in the market, establish criteria to help make this determination, and approve, deny and revoke licenses. In 1983 the commission was renamed the Renaissance Market Commission. The number of vendors and related volume of activity at the market has since declined.

The recommendation for the dissolution of the commission was based on a combination of factors. The Commission had not adopted the standard bylaws as required; and had consistently experienced difficulty in achieving full membership and a required quorum in order to conduct business. This potentially results in delays in approving vendor licenses and other Commission activities related to the market. Per City Code, this Commission is charged with the following: administering licensing for vendors at the

People's Renaissance Market; may approve deny, revoke or suspend a license to sell merchandise in the People's Renaissance Market and may establish procedures related to licensure; and shall make recommendations for expenditures on improvements or promotional activities to the Director of the Parks and Recreation Department and the Council.

Since your June 18, 2008 meeting, the Renaissance Market Commission has met twice and taken the following actions related to the bylaws.

1. Passed the Standard Boards and Commissions Bylaws
2. Voted to request the following changes to their bylaws:
 - a. Remove item 7(F) from the bylaws reading "Four members constitute a quorum"
 - b. Item 7(H) will read "a board action must be adopted by affirmative vote of a majority of members"
 - c. Voted to amend Article 2, having the People's Renaissance Market Commission reassigned to the Economic Growth and Redevelopment Services Office (EGRSO)

In addition, two of the members completed the mandatory training. The Office of the City Clerk received applications for reappointment from both members whose terms expire July 31st and nine new applications.

Since the Renaissance Market Commission has met and passed the standard bylaws as required by the ordinance and the City Council is in a position to appoint a full seven-member board, staff does not recommend that the Commission be dissolved at this time.

However, we are recommending that City staff assume the administration of the licensure of Renaissance Market vendors who seek new and renewed licenses. This change is intended to ensure timeliness and flexibility for applicants and vendors. City staff is experienced in issuing vendor licenses as a standard business practice. The intent is for the Commission to focus on strategies for improving the market and promoting its future success, rather than the administrative function of licensing vendors.

We have also received some inquiries regarding public safety in and around the market. Parks and Recreation Department and Austin Police Department staff will be working with vendors, nearby businesses and neighbors to identify and implement strategies for improved safety and security in the area.

Should you need additional information, please let me know.

Cc: Marc A. Ott, City Manager
Laura Wisdom, Chair, Renaissance Market Commission
Shirley Gentry, City Clerk
Stuart Strong, Acting Director, PARD